

Bees & Beekeeping Fact Sheet

Why do bees swarm?

Swarming is part of the natural reproduction of bee colonies. If bee swarms are left alone, they will not sting and will generally keep to themselves. In spring or in warm weather, the swarm will leave the hive, and cluster in one place to protect the queen while worker bees search for a new home. In most instances unless there is rain, the swarm will move on to continue the search for a new home.

Take precautions against bees:

- Do not hose, throw rocks at, or smoke the swarm
- Keep children and pets away from the swarm
- Keep clear of the swarm or cluster
- Wear suitable footwear outside.



Keeping Bees

Do I need approval from the Shire of Katanning ?

No, not if the keeping of bees is a non-commercial hobby/activity which is ancillary to the predominant use of your property (i.e., residential, rural living). The Shire does not have any Local Laws pertaining to the keeping of bees. This means most residents can keep bees subject to adhering to other legislative requirements without requiring approval from the Shire.

What if the Shire receives a complaint about my hives?

Whilst the Shire does not require beekeepers to obtain approval from the Shire, owners of bees are prohibited from keeping animals (including bees) in a manner that creates a nuisance or is injurious or dangerous to health. Therefore, if a complaint is received it will be investigated to determine if a nuisance or dangerous situation exists.

Things to be considered include the way the bees are being kept, behaviour of the bees (aggressive hives may need re-queening) and the health risk of surrounding properties i.e., people who get anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction) from bee stings. Where a nuisance is deemed to exist, the Shire can serve a Notice on the beekeeper requiring them to take specific actions, including the possible removal of the beehive. Failure to comply with the Notice would constitute an offence.

Bees as a commercial Operation

A commercial operation as a business or requires a more substantial operation to conduct what is considered minor and ancillary, this may have planning implications. Contact the Shire's Planning Service to find out what is required.

Other things to consider

The Biosecurity and Agriculture Management (Identification and Movement of Stock and Apiaries) Regulations 2013 require that all beekeepers in WA must be registered. Registration is through the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD). In addition, each hive must be marked with the owner's registration identifier.

What about selling the honey?

If the honey produced is only for your personal consumption, then you are not considered to be a Food Business.

If, however you are selling your honey either to larger honey packers or direct to the consumer, you will need to be a Registered Food Business.

